

The University of Chicago

THE ORIGINS OF THE
PRE-DEUTERONOMIC ELEMENTS
OF THE HISTORICAL CORPUS

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVINITY SCHOOL IN
CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR
OF PHILOSOPHY

1938

By
GALE RITZ

Private Edition, Distributed by
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CHAPTER II

THE JUDEAN HISTORY OF THE HEBREW PEOPLE

J used numerous sources in the composition of his history. Among these were aetiological stories that explained the origins of customs long practiced by the Hebrews and their neighbors, stories that explained phenomena that were puzzling to the ancient mind, for example, the suffering caused by child birth, the necessity for human toil, man's aversion to snakes, and so on. J also employed traditions of the patriarchal ancestors of the race, stories of tribal heroes who were local leaders in times of crisis, and traditions dealing with the events and personages connected with the establishment and early events of the monarchy. These he brought into a connected narrative that set forth Israel's history from creation¹ down at least as far as the consolidation of the Hebrew tribes under the monarchy.

In our effort to ascertain the characteristics of the Judean History, its social motivations and the age in which it was produced, we shall begin our examination with the J "book" of Judges. Here the stratification showing the ancient source, J's modification of it and later editorial expansion, is more clearly discernible than elsewhere in the historical corpus.

The story of the Manassite hero, Gideon² offers a good example of this stratification.³ After removal of the Deuteronomic introduction, contained in Jg. 6: 1-5, the JE story begins. Judges 6: 6-10 is clearly late, showing characteristics of a later expansion.⁴ The J story begins with the appearance to Gideon of the angel of Yahweh in human form, who apprises him of the great danger

¹Gen. 2: 4bf.

²Judges 6, 7, 8.

³The literary problems of the "book" of Judges are less complex, from the standpoint of sources, than those found elsewhere in the corpus. From the study of this "book" we may be able to develop criteria for the study of the remainder of the corpus.

⁴Heightening of the miraculous, reference to Yahweh's sending a prophet to the Israelites are evidences of lateness.

VV 25-32 interrupt the main thread of the story of the political crisis. Obviously, it is an attempt by the author of vv 11-24 to explain why Gideon was also known by the name Jerubbaal. The author is at pains to explain away this Baal combination name for his readers who apparently knew their hero by that name and would not recognize him by the name Gideon.¹ We are told that Gideon's father possessed a Baal altar. The author makes no attempt to conceal the fact that his hero's father, at least, was a Baal worshiper. Accordingly, Yahweh is said to have commanded Gideon to tear down this Baal altar and cut down the Asherah.² He is further commanded to replace these pagan symbols with an altar of Yahweh on which he is to present a burnt offering.³ Great furore is caused by this act.⁴ The Judean historian connected the name Jerubbaal with the incident, the name Jerubbaal having been given to Gideon by his fellow townsmen.⁵ The explanation of the name Jerubbaal is found in the words put by the narrator into the mouth of Gideon's Baal worshiping father, Joash, who sides with his son against the wrath of the irate Baalists: "Let Baal take his own part, for his altar has been torn down."⁶ The word Jerubbaal is misconstrued here, however, because the word will not bear the reflexive meaning given to it.⁷ It does not mean that Baal will contend for himself but simply that Baal will contend, implying that Baal will contend for the one who bears his name.

¹Cf. William C. Graham and Herbert G. May, Culture and Conscience (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1936), pp. 158-160.

2v 25.

3v 26.

⁴v 27.

5v 30.

6v 31.

7 ḡḡḡ from ḡḡ and ḡḡ, to contend, verb is Qal form, not Niphal. The name Gideon means hewer and is derived from the act of cutting down the pagan altar and the sacred pole. ḡḡḡ from ḡḡ to hew.

Several facts are apparent. The obvious purpose of the story of Gideon's name and the fact that it intrudes into the main narrative point to the conclusion that it was not a part of the original Jerubbaal story. The incident was probably invented by the J writer including the account of the origin of the fictitious name, Gideon, to make of his hero a loyal Yahwist. The most natural interpretation of the whole passage is that the name Jerubbaal, a good Baal compound name, was Gideon's original name and that both he and his people were Baal worshipers. The name Joash, a Yahweh name, given to Gideon's father, also has an interesting significance. It likewise was probably an invention of the J historian. By it J sought to leave the impression that the Manassites originally were Yahwists and from Yahwism lapsed into Baalism. If this interpretation is correct it points to the conclusion that the Manassite hero story was Baalistic in its origins and Elohim was the name used for deity.

The original story begins at Jg. 6: 33. This section runs to Jg. 7: 2. In this portion we find a puzzling intermixture of Elohim and Yahweh names of deity. If the theory of Elohistic origins of the original story is correct, an explanation of the presence of the two names is to be found in J's editing of the original story. His Yahwization of the tradition was further accomplished by substituting, at intervals, the name Yahweh for Elohim. Complete elimination of the name Elohim, however, would have been unwise, inasmuch as a favorable reception for the story in a completely Yahwized form by those readers who were used to it in its original form would have been jeopardized. This section, Jg. 6: 33-7: 2, recounts the divine authentication of Gideon's call. This is accomplished by the presence of dew on the fleece which Gideon has placed on the threshing floor.¹ The insertion of the name Gideon at 7: 1 is clearly an addition to the original text.

Judges 7: 2-8 is late and belongs to the strand comprised of Jg. 6: 7-10; 7: 2-8, 16-23; 8: 4-28. A careful reading of these portions indicates that they constitute a late expansion of J with very different characteristics from those of the J story and, of

¹v 37.

course, differently motivated.¹

Judges 7: 14 relates the incident of Gideon's visit to the Midianite camp where he overhears the telling of a dream by one of the Midianites to his comrade. It is given as further authentication² of the promise of victory to Gideon. The warrior dreamed that a barley crust came tumbling into the Midianite camp and rolling against a tent, caused it to fall flat. This section with Jg. 6: 33-72, and 7: 23-8: 3 make up the original Manassite story, or what remains of it, after J's editing. Judges 8: 29-32, a Yahwistic addition, brings the original J story to an end.

The principle addition J made is 6: 11-32. Let us examine this section with the view of determining J's predominant interests. To Yahweh credit is given for Gideon's heroism. J devotes considerable space to his description of the theophany by which Gideon was inspired and energized for his undertaking. In very anthropomorphic form, the angel of Yahweh comes and sits down to converse with Gideon.³ To impress upon the minds of his readers the fact that it actually was Yahweh who prompted Gideon to undertake his difficult task, the author represents Gideon as reluctant to believe that it was really Yahweh with whom he conversed and that he could make good in his promise to be with him and give him success.⁴ J cleverly embodies in the story his view that Yahweh has been traditionally regarded as responsible for Hebrew success and greatness, by putting in Gideon's mouth these words: "Where are all his wonderful deeds, which our fathers recounted to us, saying, 'Was it not out of Egypt that Yahweh brought us?'"⁵ J makes his point all the more effectively by representing Gideon's reluctance as finally overcome by a final authentication which no longer left any doubt in Gideon's mind. This consisted in a miraculous consuming of a food offering. The angel Yahweh merely touched the meat and unleavened cakes and fire burst forth and consumed them.⁶ J makes this theophany the dominant feature of Gideon's preparation for his task.

¹This strand is a part of the theocratic expansion of the J narrative and will be taken up in the next chapter.

²Along with 6: 37-40, Dew on the Fleece, constitutes the divine authentication in the original Manassite story.

³Jg. 6: 11.

⁴Jg. 4: 13, 18.

⁵v 13.

⁶v 21.

It will be observed that J does not represent Gideon as a medium through whom the divine power might operate to bring about victory. Rather, he leaves much for human accomplishment. "Go in this strength of yours, and save Israel," he tells him.¹ The most that is promised to him is that Yahweh is sending him, that he will be with him, and that he is not to die because he has seen Yahweh face to face.²

The evidence strongly favors the view, that J has Yahwized an old Pagan story, which was Elohistie in its religious origins and transmission.³ He manipulates the facts of the incident of Midianite oppression and the heroism of the Baalist Jerubbaal to make his point that it was Yahweh who called Gideon and was responsible for his success.

The story of the Gileadite hero, Jephthah, offers another interesting example of J's treatment of his sources.⁴ The Deuteronomic framework is found in Jg. 10: 6-18 and 12: 7. The story proper, then begins at 11: 1.⁵ At the outset, the extraordinary character of Jephthah's birth is related. He is the son of a harlot, the offspring of a cult union, which fact precludes the possibility of his sharing in his father's estate. For this reason he becomes an outcast from his family and the leader of a marauding band much on the order of David, the type of individual that delighted the fancy of ancient story tellers. The circumstances surrounding Jephthah's birth thus point to the pagan character of the story.

¹v 14.

²vv 12, 14, 23.

³Karl Budde, Das Buch der Richter, pp. xii-xv.

George Foote Moore, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Judges (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1910), pp. xxxiif., introduction, and treatment of Gideon story. Both scholars hold that J and E strands are found in the "book" of Judges. But both seek to make the analysis on the basis of the criterion of divine names. The stratification in Judges is early E or Elohistie, Yahwistic, and theocratic.

⁴Judges 10: 6-12: 7.

⁵Judges 11: 11b seems to be out of place and it is suggested that it should follow 6: 31. It probably refers to Gideon's act of offering sacrifice immediately before he began his conquest. The "words" spoken of in VII b refer to the vow made at that time.

At the importunity of the elders of Gilead, Jephthah consented to lead their forces against the Ammonites. After the arrangement was completed whereby Jephthah became chief of the Gileadites, he went to Mizpeh where he consulted Yahweh before beginning his undertaking.¹

A prominent feature of the story is the vow of Jephthah to Yahweh that if he will deliver the Ammonites into his power, he will offer as a burnt-offering the first person he should meet coming out of the door of his house following the victory.² Whom should he meet but his only daughter! Before he carries out his vow, Jephthah grants her request that she be permitted to go with her companions on the mountains where for two months she could bewail her virginity. It is explained that following the incident, it became "a custom in Israel for the Israelite maidens to go annually to commemorate the daughter of Jephthah, the Gileadite, for four days in the year."³

Evidently, the main object of the story in its original form is to explain the origin of this custom, later adopted by the Hebrews. That the custom of virgins bewailing their virginity is pagan in its origin is seen from its fertility motif, prominent in the productivity pattern dominant all over the Near East. Further confirmation of the pagan character of the story is found in the name Jephthah. It is from the Hebrew verb, פָּתַח , meaning open. It is the Qal form and means, El opens.⁴

J appears to have made few additions to the story. If our view is correct concerning the non-Yahwistic character of the story, possibly Yahwization by the substitution at intervals of the name Yahweh for Elohim as the name of deity was the extent of the changes J made.

Explanation of the current Hebrew cult ritual, referred to above, was only secondary with J. His great objective was to offer an explanation of Jephthah's greatness and success. In this, his view is similar to that which he held for Gideon. The spirit of Yahweh inspired him to begin his desperate undertaking.⁵ J is per-

¹Ch. 11: 29-30.

²11: 34.

³v 40.

⁴Brown, Driver and Briggs, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (Boston and New York: Houghton & Mifflin Co., 1907), p. 834.

⁵11: 29.

haps less explicit here than in the case of Gideon in regard to the manner of this initial divine call and inspiring. He is content to say merely that "the spirit of Yahweh inspired Jephthah." But J has left no doubt in his readers' minds that Jephthah was a thoroughgoing Yahwist for whose success Yahweh was directly responsible.¹ It becomes clear that J's great purpose in retelling the Jephthah story, was to show that in a time of crisis, Yahweh prepared a leader to bring the Israelites safely through the emergency and to further them in their progress toward their great goal.²

The Samson story³ recounts the adventures of another Northern hero whom J brings into his succession of deliverers. This Danite hero arose in the emergency of the Philistine crisis. The story has many elements of popular folk lore that must have made it a favorite around the campfire, such as, Samson's pranks, his miraculous strength and the secret of it and the way in which he finally brought destruction to his enemies.

The Samson story has pagan characteristics. The name Samson may indicate a connection with sun worship.⁴ This fact seen in connection with the numerous appearances of the name Elohim point undeniably to the pagan origin of the story. The theory of sources as applied in Genesis, if applied to this phenomenon of alternation of divine names in the Samson story, again would break down. The name Yahweh appears throughout the story in sections that are clearly original. The most plausible explanation here, as in the Gideon and Jephthah stories, is that J has injected the name Yahweh at these places.

There are passages originally Yahwistic and added by J. The first of these we shall consider is Jg. 13: 15-23, which re-

¹By substituting at intervals, the name Yahweh for Elohim, as he did in the Gideon story, J makes it clear that Yahweh is the Elohim of Israel, 11: 23, 25.

²For J, the grand objective of the Hebrews is the political status of Nationhood. Yahweh's initial call to Abraham included this promise. Gen. 12: 1, 2.

³Judges 13-16.

⁴The derivation of the name Samson from the word Sun is clear in the Hebrew. שמשון Shimshon--Samson, שמש Shemesh--sun. The name of Samson's father Manoah, מנוח, from the verb form נח, to rest, means resting place or rest.

counts the theophany to Manoah, Samson's father.¹ The similarity between this and the theophany to Gideon² is at once apparent. Here the authentication is accomplished in the same manner as previously, that is, a food offering is consumed before his eyes.³ Manoah did not at first recognize the divine apparition as the angel of Yahweh. He was finally convinced by the divine demonstration and, as in the case of Gideon, expresses his fear to his wife for having seen the divine visage.⁴ Manoah's identification of the divine visitant with Elohim,⁵ may be a device of J to impress on his Northern readers that this Elohim was none other than Yahweh. This dedication before his birth brought Yahweh's blessing upon Samson.⁶ But this was not sufficient when crises came. It was Yahweh's repeated energizing that enabled Samson to rise to superhuman heights as occasion demanded.⁷ The popular explanation of Samson's strength was that it resided in his hair. In the interest of convincing his readers who were long familiar with the story, that Yahweh was the true deity, he shows them that they were wrong about their theory of Samson's strength. Yahweh was really the secret of his power. J accomplished this by the addition of several verses: 14: 6, 19; 15: 14; 16: 28. In the first three references identical phraseology is used: "Then the Spirit of Yahweh came rushing upon him. . . ." Samson is thus made into a thorough going "theophanic" hero. He was specially called in this crisis. He is only a deliverer in a temporary emergency, however, - a man of the hour.

J's anxiety to explain the secret of Samson's power and the evident predominance of Elohim in the original narrative point to the conclusion that the Danites were originally non-Yahwists. At the time when J wrote, there is, obviously, still the problem in the North of apostasy from Yahweh or the prevalence of Baalism to contend with. Probably the latter represents the true situation.

Several facts become apparent from our study of these tribal stories and J's treatment of them. They indicate a period

¹The name Yahweh predominates. The section is a unit in itself describing Manoah's experience with the angel of Yahweh.

²Jg. 6: 11-32.

³Vv 19-22.

⁴v 22.

⁵v 22.

⁶v 25.

⁷v 25b.

of independence when the tribes were acting alone or in small coalitions, in times of emergency. Ephraim's complaint to Manasseh about not being permitted to share in the latter's military glory plainly indicates a tendency toward consolidation, however.¹ J furthers the ideal of unification by leaving the impression that the judges were a succession of leaders. The Deuteronomist carries the idea still farther by regarding each judge as a ruler of all the tribes.² While J does not change the stories that come into his hands sufficiently to distort the true character of the events, he accomplishes his unification by his process of Yahwization. All of these heroes belong in the same succession of secular leaders who were called to their task and prepared for it by the same deity.

J begins his history with creation.³ His broad human interest is shown in the aetiological stories⁴ which he includes in his narrative: the creation and fall of man,⁵ origin of the giants,⁶ story of the Flood,⁷ curse of Canaan,⁸ and the Tower of Babel.⁹ Several of these stories, for example, the creation and flood stories, have Babylonian parallels and were long in the possession of the Hebrews, possibly having been brought to Canaan by the Hyksos. In all probability, they were Elohist in their origin and early transmission. Very likely they were in circulation in Judah as well as in the North. If so, the process of Yahwization could have gone on for a considerable time before J in-

¹Jg. 8: 1-3. The Song of Deborah shows a much larger coalition, Judges 5. The tribe of Judah had not yet risen to prominence in the Judges period, however.

²Throughout the Deuteronomic framework of Judges. Cf. Jg. 8: 28; 10: 3-5; 12: 7; 16: 31.

³Gen. 2: 4bf.

⁴The priestly editor has greatly expanded these stories to account for the origins of religious institutions.

⁵Gen. 2: 46--3: 24.

⁶Gen. 6: 1-4.

⁷Gen. 6: 5--9: 17, with additions by the priestly editor.

⁸Gen. 9: 18-29.

⁹Gen. 11: 1-9.

corporated the stories in his narrative. J's strong Yahwizing tendency was doubtless responsible for putting Yahweh back at the very beginning - at creation, "Yahweh Elohim made the heavens and the earth."¹ This combination name of deity and the intermixture of divine names elsewhere would seem to be convincing proof that the explanation here offered is valid. The known pagan character of some of the stories as previously indicated, adds additional confirmation.²

By beginning his narrative with creation, the very act of bringing forth the heavens and the earth, which is the work of Yahweh, J adds greatly to Yahweh's prestige and furthers the process of racial unification. By so doing, J also adds to the prestige of Israel. The god of creation by his own act has chosen Israel to be his own people. The succession of Israel's deliverers is thereby brought under the sway of the divine creator.

Hebrew history proper begins with the call of Abraham.³ It was at Yahweh's instigation that Abraham left his home and kindred, to journey to a land that he would show him. The promise that Yahweh makes to Abraham is significant, "I will make a great nation of you."⁴ J here connects the conception of the Hebrew

¹The critical analysis of the "Hexateuch" into the various sources will, for the most part, remain unchallenged. The present study is based on the analysis of E. S. Brightman, Sources of the Hexateuch (New York and Cincinnati, 1918). A vast amount of detailed work has been and is being done on the analytical and exegetical features of the texts. That this work is indispensable goes without saying. The present study aims at a broader approach to these sources to determine their nature and origin, based on typical passages throughout the extent of the sources, passages that are indisputably J or E as the case may be. If we succeed in our objective of determining the functional character and social provenance of the J and E strands, our study may be useful as an aid in the more detailed textual work.

²Cf. R. W. Rogers, Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1912). Note especially the parallels to creation and flood stories.

Hermann Gunkel, Legends of Genesis (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1907).

³Genesis 12.

⁴Gen. 12: 2.

Nation with the call of a single racial ancestor, Abraham. Not only will he make of Abraham's descendants a great nation, but he promises them the land of Canaan for their possession.¹ The fact of descent from a common ancestor makes the Hebrews one people. This racial oneness constitutes for J a great bond of unity of the Hebrews. Everywhere this fact receives emphasis in the J stratum. They are one race under the domination of one deity. The direct call of Yahweh to Abraham prepared the patriarch for his great responsibility.

J records a theophany to Abraham in which he renews his promise of possession of the land and the promise of an heir.² The confirmation of the theophany seems incomplete, a later expansion having occurred at this point.³

J's idea of special selection appears in the story of the putting away of Abraham's concubine, Hagar, and her son Ishmael.⁴ J is interested in racial purity, but even more in racial unity and continuity. The line is continued through Isaac, who is born to Abraham and Sarah in their old age.⁵ J's concern for racial purity is shown in the story of Rebekah, who is brought from the land of Abraham's birth to be the wife of Isaac.⁶ He is unwilling that the racial blood should be contaminated by intermarriage with the Canaanites, an idea that was to be increasingly emphasized by later editors.⁷ In a theophany to Isaac Yahweh renews the promise made to Abraham, namely, that of possession of

¹Gen. 12: 7.

²Genesis 15. This passage has received theocratic expansion. Cf. VV 5, 13-15.

³See above.

⁴Gen. 16: 4-14.

⁵Gen. 21: 1f. With theocratic and priestly expansions. The miraculous character of Isaac's birth also emphasizes J's idea of special selection.

⁶Gen. 24: 1-67. This section is entirely J.

⁷J's interest in racial purity is not motivated by cultural considerations. His purpose is rather to show the homogeneous character of the Hebrew race.

the land, numerous descendants, and a great nation.¹

The racial line is finally narrowed to Jacob and his descendants. The relations of the two sons of Isaac, Jacob and Esau, the enmity between them, and the evident hostility of the author to Esau as set forth by J, probably reflect the actual historical situation in relation to Edom.²

J has the same motifs in his account of Jacob as in the earlier patriarchs. Jacob also returns to his native land Haran, to secure a wife.³ The familiar theophany occurs and the promise made to Abraham and Isaac is repeated to him.⁴ Jacob succeeds in his mission and secures from among his kin two wives and two concubines. J then recounts the births of Jacob's twelve sons.⁵ This makes his ideal of racial unity complete. The twelve sons of Jacob bring forth the twelve Hebrew tribes which go back in a direct line to one ancestor. However, the fact that some were the product of concubinage reflects a loose connection of some of the tribes with the main body of Israelites. The Northern tribes Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher who were longer in residence in Palestine than the more important central and Southern tribes are represented as sons of the concubines, Bilhah and Zilpah.⁶ The four Southern tribes Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah, and Issachar and Zebulun are sons of Leah, while Joseph and Benjamin are sons of the more favored wife, Rachel.

A very ancient story describing a strange theophany to Jacob, apparently inserted by J in his narrative, reflects the original Elohistic character of the patriarchal stories.⁷ Jacob is said to have wrestled with "a man" until daybreak during which the socket of Jacob's thigh became dislocated. In its origins, the story was obviously designed to explain a food custom, the prohibition against eating the food of the thigh.⁸ The change of

¹Gen. 26: 1-33. A typical J section, the names Yahweh and Elohim intermingle.

²Gen. 27: 1f. Cf. I Ki. 11: 14-25; II Ki. 3: 20-22.

³Gen. 28: 10.

⁴Gen. 28: 13-16.

⁵Gen. 29: 31-30: 24.

⁶Gen. 30: 4-14.

⁷Gen. 32: 24-32.

⁸An indication of J's sympathy toward cultic regulations.

name Jacob to Israel may reflect a change in the status of the Hebrews probably at the time of the conquest.¹ The prevalence of Elohim as the name of deity and the presence of the place name Peniel, an El compound name, is further indication of the non-Yahwistic origin of the story. Practically no Jahwization has been done.

Hebrew history is continued by J in the events surrounding the career of Joseph. The basis of his brothers' jealousy and his subsequent passage to Egypt is laid in the fact of his father's greater love for him as manifested by the gift of a beautiful cloak.² This aroused the jealousy of his brothers who plotted his destruction.³ It turned out that at Judah's instigation Joseph was sold to a band of Ishmaelites who in turn sold him to Potiphar, an officer of the Pharaoh.⁴

The climax of the Joseph stories is, of course, the Egyptian sojourn of the twelve tribes occasioned by a famine in the land of Canaan.⁵ The Joseph saga prepares for this event. J heightens the critical aspects of this period of Hebrew history. As on other similar occasions, a deliverer is raised up to bring the Hebrews safely through the emergency. On this occasion it is Joseph. J accounts for Joseph's success, as he did in the later Judges stories, by attributing it entirely to Yahweh's inspiration. "Yahweh was with Joseph. . . . Yahweh made everything prosper with him which he undertook."⁶ The story reaches its climax with the settlement of all the Israelites in their new home, the land of Goshen.⁷

¹Gen. 24: 28.

²Gen. 37: 3-4.

³Gen. 37: 3-4 (J). The theocratic expansion offers a different reason, vv 5-11. He is said to have had a dream in which he is represented as exercising authority over his brothers, a premonition of the later relationship of Joseph and his brothers.

⁴Gen. 37: 26, 27; 39: 1.

⁵The J section, Genesis 38, which recounts the exploits of Judah, indicates the very early residence in Canaan of the tribe of Judah. It reflects the prevalence of the practice of sacred prostitution. The greatest importance of the chapter is its bearing on the place of Judah in the reconstruction of early Hebrew History.

⁶Gen. 39: 2, 21, 23.

⁷Gen. 47: 1-5.

The emphases which J seeks to make here are, as before, the unity of the Israelites in this first national crisis, and their deliverance by a Yahweh-inspired savior. The tradition of the Egyptian sojourn was doubtlessly of Northern origin and circulation. J does not rob the Northern hero Joseph of the glory belonging to him. He merely explains the secret of his success. In so doing, the Southern deity, Yahweh receives credit for the victory. He does give Judah a prominent place, however, as the spokesman for the other brothers. J makes him the representative of Israel in negotiations with Joseph relative to residence in Egypt.¹

Thus the patriarchal history is brought to a close. The unity of the history is preserved even in the matter of the burial of the patriarchs. Jacob's last charge to his sons is that he be buried back in Canaan, the land of promise. In fact the burial is to occur in the same place where the bones of Abraham and Isaac and their wives reposed.²

But the rescue from one crisis only led to another. The growth in numbers of the Hebrews and their consequent threat to the Egyptians brought oppression upon them. They were pressed into forced labor by the Pharaoh and used by him in his building enterprises.³ So intolerable became the oppression that the Hebrew spirit could no longer bear it. Moreover, for J the narrative must move on. Yahweh has promised a land and a nation to the people whom he has chosen. Consequently, a deliverer must be raised up to bring the Israelites out of their new crisis and to send them on their course toward the grand consummation, nationhood.

When we first meet Moses in the J narrative, he is a full-grown man.⁴ Because of his indiscretion in slaying an Egyptian who had killed a fellow Hebrew, Moses was forced to flee Egypt. He finds shelter among the Midianites where he takes as wife, Zipporah the daughter of Reuel, the priest of Midian. Here he began the rearing of his family and apparently intended to make

¹Gen. 46: 28.

²Gen. 49: 29-33.

³Ex. 1: 8-12, with priestly expansions, vv 1-5, 7.

⁴Ex. 2: 11.

his residence permanently among the Midianites. But suddenly something happened that completely changed the direction of his life. "The Angel of Yahweh appeared to him. . . ."¹ Moses experienced one of the classic theophanies of religious history. Out of the bush that burned and was not consumed appeared the Angel of Yahweh.² When Moses turned aside, there sounded the divine voice. Yahweh informed him that he was fully cognizant of the plight of the Hebrews under their Egyptian taskmasters and that he proposed to rescue them and bring them to the glorious land he had already promised them.³ Moses was to be his instrument for effecting the rescue. He is to return to Egypt and begin his task by informing the elders of Yahweh's appearance to him and his charge to his servant. He is to impress on their minds the significant fact that it really is Yahweh who is behind this movement, the very god of their fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.⁴ The clear implication here is that the early Hebrews used the name Elohim for their deity. Either naively believing that Yahweh was thus early worshiped or purely as a matter of strategy, J thus makes Yahweh the Hebrew deity from these early beginnings.

In keeping with J's strategy elsewhere, he represents the people as reluctant to believe that Yahweh is actually the moving spirit. This gives him his opportunity of emphasizing his point of Yahweh's place in Hebrew history. His authentication to Moses was, of course, accomplished by the burning bush incident. Yahweh provided Moses with means of his personal authentication to the elders. These consisted in the staff that was turned into a snake and the leprous hand.⁵ In the course of the deliverance wrought by Moses, Yahweh gives him constant direction.⁶ Yahweh, himself, prepares the way for the deliverance by bringing plagues on the Egyptians, but the actual leadership of the people falls to

¹Ex. 3: 2.

²Ex. 3: 2-22, with theocratic additions.

³VV 7-8.

⁴VV 16-18.

⁵Ex. 4: 1-9.

⁶Ex. 4: 23; 6: 1; 7: 14; 8: 1.

Moses.¹ At the destruction wrought by the last plague, the striking down of the first-born of the Egyptians, the people followed Moses' instructions and the escape was finally consummated.² After the emergence, Moses bade the Israelites commemorate their deliverance by keeping the passover. He further reminded them of the purpose for which Yahweh had brought them safely out of bondage, namely to lead them to the land he had promised to their fathers.³ Everywhere in J we find these familiar motifs. He does not permit his readers to lose sight of the goal toward which Israelite history moves, namely, a nation under a divinely appointed head.

The usual picture we have of Moses is that of a lawgiver but this is mainly due to the theocratic expansion of J's narrative. J's picture of Moses is that of the typical theophanic deliverer. He presents the mountain experience of Moses wherein Yahweh calls him to the top of the mountain and makes a covenant with him as the representative of the people. The terms of the covenant are very simple. In return for their obedience, Yahweh promises that the Israelites shall be "a holy nation" to him.⁴ Again, the ideas of unity and nationhood are emphasized. The J narrative has been greatly expanded at this point by the addition of the E decalogue and the Covenant Code.⁵ J merely includes the details of the mountain theophany and the terms of the covenant there established. To the great consternation of the people, Yahweh appeared in fire and smoke.⁶ The people are reminded that they may not come up to the top; only their divinely chosen representative was permitted this privilege.⁷ J's theory is that Israel's great destiny lies in the hands of a succession of divinely chosen leaders. He is monotonous in his repetition of the promise made to the fathers.⁸ It is the thread that runs through his entire narrative.

¹The miraculous character of the entire story of the emergence from Egypt, is intended by J to convey the idea of Yahweh's supreme concern for his chosen people and the part he has played in their history.

²Ex. 12: 29-34.

³Ex. 13: 3-16.

⁴Ex. 19: 3b-9.

⁵The E Decalogue, Ex. 20: 1-17, and the Book of the Covenant, Ex. 20: 22--23: 33 are theocratic.

⁶Ex. 19: 18.

⁷Ex. 19: 20-25.

⁸Ex. 33: 1.

After further request for information about Yahweh's instructions, Moses is permitted to see Yahweh as he passes by. The theophany comes to a climax in the actual making of the covenant which merely seals the promise previously made. The covenant relationship of the Israelites must be exclusively with Yahweh. When they enter the promised land, they must avoid making a covenant with the inhabitants and their deities. Yahweh will not countenance a divided loyalty. But the Mosaic covenant, it will be observed, was only temporary. It was merely preparatory to the covenant made on the occasion of the setting up of the nation when they will have become established in Canaan. The giving of the ten words, the so-called J decalogue,¹ completes the events of Moses' Sinai experience. It will be noted that this code is exclusively ritualistic and cannot be considered as a legal code by which the affairs of the nation may be ordered.

The import of the Sinai theophany to Moses in J's narrative is solely that of a further authentication of Yahweh's choice of Moses as the deliverer at a time of peril, and a promise of his continued favor until the final consummation is reached. In addition, the covenant is entered into by the two parties, Yahweh and the Israelites, wherein Yahweh agrees to bring to realization the promise made originally to Abraham. The picture of Moses we get from J is not unlike that of other deliverers. If he rose to greater heights it was because the crisis demanded a leadership of greater capacity. In no case does J represent Moses in the light of lawgiver.

The account of the later experiences in the desert² continues the movement toward Canaan under the leadership of Moses. At the constant direction of Yahweh, he deals with the complaints of the people and leads them through the vicissitudes of the desert

¹It may be that the reference here to the second set of stone tablets (34: 1-5) is editorial and harmonistic and not a part of the original J narrative. It may have been necessarily injected here because of the breaking of the first tablets on the occasion of the Golden Calf incident and Moses' anger caused by that event. In the latter instance, Yahweh did not write but passed in front of Moses proclaiming the ten words.

²Num. 10: 29f.

experience. The J material is very scanty at this point. The author merely records the sending of spies and their report,¹ the complaints of the people and Moses' intercession with Yahweh in their behalf,² the encounter with Balak, King of Moab and the parables of Balaam.³

It will be observed that J represents the twelve tribes as participating in the desert wanderings and the journey through Edom and Moab as they had all shared the Egyptian experience. But so far as the historical movements of the Israelites are concerned, J's idealization ceases with the entry into Canaan. The meagre remaining J material on the conquest which is embedded in the "book" of Joshua and in Jg. 1: 1-2: 5, represents the conquest as accomplished slowly and by the independent efforts of the separate tribes.⁴ As we have seen, J is similarly realistic in his treatment of the judges' period. This unification of the tribal traditions in the later period was of necessity less complete for J than for the more remote period which lent itself more readily to such idealization.

J's account of the founding of the monarchy is found in I Sam. 9: 1-10: 16. The story is naively told. Saul is represented as entirely innocent of the events that are transpiring. As a youth, he is sent on an errand by his father to find his lost asses. Here he comes in contact with a country seer, a man of God, Samuel. Samuel⁵ aids him in his search but has a more important matter to take up with him, namely, that of the kingship. All this took place at the instigation of Yahweh who communicated to Samuel the information that Saul was coming to him and the instruction that the latter was to be anointed a leader of Israel.⁶

¹Num. 13: 17, 19, 21-29.

²Num. 14: 11-21.

³Num. 22: 6-7, 11, 17-18, 22-35; 24: 1-25. The Balaam parables play up the motif of special choice. Yahweh overruled Balak's command to Baalam to curse Israel.

⁴Josh. 15: 13, 15-19; 16: 10; 17: 11-18; 19: 47.

⁵Samuel is an El name. Samuel is said to have been a "man of Elohim." The non-Yahwistic origin is clear.

⁶I Sam. 9: 15f.

The existing situation was the oppression of the Israelites at the hands of the Philistines. Samuel carried out Yahweh's order in strictest secrecy.¹ Saul was bidden to return and whatever the spirit of Yahweh directed him to do, that he should obediently perform. The usual confirmation followed. Saul is to meet two men on his return who will tell him of the whereabouts of the lost asses.² J informs his readers that these signs took place that very day. They are represented as Yahweh's means of authentication of himself to Saul. In addition, the Spirit of God seized upon Saul and changed him into another man so that he prophesied ecstatically.³ Saul instantly became a thoroughgoing Yahwist. The immediate occasion for Saul's public acclamation was the siege of Jabesh-Gilead by the Ammonites.⁴ Saul arose to the occasion nobly and his public anointing at Gilgal followed.⁵

Several significant features of J's account of the establishment of the monarchy are at once apparent. Yahweh was responsible both for its establishment and the selection of Saul. There is no hint in J of any disapproval of the monarchy. But it was done through the agency of Samuel. Saul experienced an energizing by Yahweh later, but at the outset it was mediated through Samuel. J is not unfriendly to Saul but a lesser place for him in the succession of Yahweh-called and inspired leaders of Israel may be thus indicated by J. Saul had only slightly more jurisdiction than one of the judges. For J, Saul is only an interim ruler before the great consummation. The united nation was yet to be established. That was the task of J's great hero David.

J's preference for David is indicated in his story of Saul's jealousy of David because of the latter's superior military prowess.⁶ In this way J introduces his hero to his readers. He continues his account by relating David's Marriage to Michal, Saul's daughter, and the great feat by which he won her.⁷ Although realistically set forth, at every point J exalts David's prowess over that of his contemporaries. J's conception of the messianic character of the Kingship is clearly set forth in the story of David's kindness in sparing the life of his enemy, Saul.⁸

¹I Sam. 9: 27.

²I Sam. 10: 2f.

³I Sam. 10: 9f.

⁴I Samuel 11.

⁵I Sam. 11: 15.

⁶I Sam. 18:6-11.

⁷I Sam. 18: 20-30

⁸I Samuel 26.

David refused to take Saul's life, with these words, "Destroy him not, for who can lay his hand upon the Lord's Messiah and be innocent."¹ David shows the same attitude in his treatment of Saul's son and heir, Ishbaal. The latter's slayers, on bringing Ishbaal's head to David, were put to death at David's command.² In this, J has probably correctly represented David's view of the Kingship. David held a resolute view of the hereditary character of the office as seen in his desire to have Michal, Saul's daughter, his wife, returned to him. This, he held, would strengthen his claim to the throne. David's idea of the royal continuity is further shown by his choice of Solomon as his successor. With this, J probably ends his history,³ the monarchy being safely established in the line of David.

J's passage dealing with David's induction into office at Hebron contains several significant statements of what transpired on that occasion.⁴ The earlier account which fell into J's hands and which he expanded, states that the Elders of Israel made a covenant with David and anointed David King over Israel (v 3). J's expansion relates that "all the tribes of Israel came to David to Hebron."⁵ J's conception of racial unity is again expressed in these words put in the mouths of the Northern tribesmen: "Behold, we are your bone and your flesh."⁶ The rest of the statement merely indicates Saul's secondary character in J's opinion and implies that already during Saul's reign a covenant relationship had been in effect between David and Yahweh, "You shall shepherd my people Israel and you shall be leader over Israel." Thus early, David had been accorded the preeminence over Saul.

J's conception of the permanency of David's house here established, is expressed in the words of Abigail: "Yahweh will surely make of my lord a secure house, for my lord is fighting the wars of Yahweh, and evil shall not be found in you all your

¹I Sam. 26: 9.

²II Sam. 4: 8-12.

³I Ki. 2: 46

⁴II Sam. 5: 1-3.

⁵VI.

⁶V 2.

days."¹

The Judean David is a Yahwist from the beginning. J introduces him to his readers on the occasion of his coming to Saul as Court Musician, in these glowing terms: "Skillful in playing and a man of unusual power, a warrior, judicious in speech, a distinguished looking man and Yahweh is with him."² The secret of David's greatness is similar to that of his predecessors in the theophanic line. From this first emergence into public life, Yahweh's training of David was continuous until its final consummation in his anointing. For J, there was no need of a theophany in which Yahweh should issue a special call to David as in the case of Moses and the judges. All of the events of the reign of Saul were leading to this grand climax.

The deliverers before David's time served their day and generation. Each new crisis brought forth its man of the hour called forth by Yahweh. With David and his line the succession reached its climax and permanency.³ For the first time after the entry into Canaan, the tribes were all brought under one head. This was the realization of Yahweh's oft-repeated promise to the patriarchs and to Moses, namely, that of a land and a nation. J's passion for unity finds its complete satisfaction in this event.

With this examination of typical passages from J's treatment of history we shall try to formulate his philosophy of history and the social provenance that underlay it. The great importance for J of the establishment of the Kingdom of David grows out of his conception of Yahweh's method of dealing with his people. Yahweh has chosen Israel to be his very own. Likewise, he has

¹I Sam. 25: 28. Cf. II Sam. 6: 21-23, David's reply to Michal's reprimand: "Blessed is Yahweh who chose me rather than your father and rather than any of his house to appoint me a leader over the people of Yahweh, over Israel. . . ." Cf. The "Bundle of Life" passage, I Sam. 25: 29-31. This clearly indicates J's view of David's divine character.

²I Sam. 16: 18.

³This view of J's "theophanic" line of temporary leaders which culminated in the permanent house of David was suggested by Dr. W. C. Graham. He has developed the idea in an unpublished manuscript to which the writer was given access.

chosen the medium of relationship between the two parties of the covenant. J thus represents it as closed system. For an Israelite to be outside the sway of this divinely appointed medium of grace is to be outside Yahweh's care. Consequently, for J, the greatest apostasy was to reject the jurisdiction of the Davidic dynasty. In this, J cannot be accused of a narrow patriotic interest in his fellow Judean David. The system he visualizes is an inclusive one. All of the Hebrews come within the scope of his interest. The union of all the tribes under one head, to him the most profoundly significant event in Hebrew history, J, in a sense, universalizes. It was the act of a God who had created the world. He had chosen a people for himself and had selected leaders from time to time in the course of their history constantly looking toward this event. The establishment of the monarchy with its Davidic head, was for J the grand realization of that unity of his people, which he had idealized in his conception of one racial ancestor.

The king, for J, was both religious and secular head of the state. In addition to fighting the wars of Yahweh¹ David was priest, exercising full religious functions.² The basic interests of the people were thus brought under one head, the messianic King who was Yahweh's envoy.³ J's sympathy for political institutions and his confidence in secular power thus grow out of his philosophy of history and his conception of divine-human relationships both of which are intimately related. In this it may be said that J puts his emphasis on the institution rather than on the individual occupant of the throne. J is primarily interested in order and stability; consequently he places his confidence in a system that he thinks will bring the largest satisfactions to

¹ Ancient warfare was, of course, a religious function.

² II Sam. 6: 17, 18.

³ The sacredness of the office of messianic king of the Davidic line is further seen in the difference of attitude toward the person of the king in the North and South. There were numerous regicides in the North but none in Judah. The exception is Athaliah a Northerner who sought to destroy the heirs to the throne. The pattern established by David, who refused to take the life of any of Yahweh's anointed, prevailed in Judah. The act of Athaliah was utterly abhorrent to the people of the Southern Kingdom.

the nation as a whole. In J's time the monarchy had not proved its inadequacy as was true of it in the later age. His interest in the individual occupant of the throne lies in the contribution he can make to that end.

J is not given to idealizing his characters, however. For example, he does not seek to cover up the prevarication of Abraham or the conniving of Jacob.¹ This realistic presentation of human weakness as well as strength gives to J's style the simplicity and vigor we so much admire. He allows to stand Nathan's criticism of his greatest hero David for his treatment of Uriah.²

J's attitude toward the cultus is in harmony with his sympathy for the monarchy. He mentions the local shrines without criticism.³ Abraham built altars at Shechem, Bethel and Hebron.⁴ Isaac built an altar at Beersheba.⁵ His friendliness to the local shrines and their worship receives further confirmation by his inclusion of popular etymologies of shrine names in his narrative.⁶ J alludes also to sacred trees.⁷

J accepted sacrifice as a proper and legitimate method by which the worshiper could approach the deity and win his favor. On the occasion of the bringing of the ark to Jerusalem, David is said to have "offered whole burnt-offerings and thank-offerings before Yahweh."⁸ On several occasions J mentions the miraculous consuming of food offerings as Yahweh's means of authenticating himself to his doubting votaries.⁹

¹This is as we should expect in J, inasmuch as he has not benefited by the prophetic elevation of moral standards.

²II Sam. 11, 12. This may, however, be a late prophetic passage. If included by J, it may indicate that already J saw danger signs on the political horizon.

³S. R. Driver, Introduction to Literature of Old Testament (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1903), pp. 117-120.

⁴Gen. 12: 7, 8; 13: 4, 18.

⁵Gen. 26: 25.

⁶Gen. 16: 14; 28: 19; 32: 30; 33: 17; 50: 11.

⁷Gen. 12: 6; 18: 1; 21: 33; Jg. 6: 11, 19.

⁸II Sam. 6: 18.

⁹Jg. 6: 19-25; 13: 19-25.

The J decalogue is a purely ritualistic code.¹ It includes several prohibitions, but accepts the cultic system without criticism. The Hebrews are forbidden to make "any molten god for themselves."² Several provisions appear to be of very great antiquity, namely, the prohibition of offering blood with unleavened bread, of leaving any of the passover festival over until the following morning,³ and the prohibition of boiling a kid in its mother's milk.⁴ In addition to its ancient character, the Yahwization of the code indicates the Canaanitic-Elohistic origin of the so-called J decalogue. J's was a government by the institution of the monarchy which was practically a law unto itself. There was no place in the full-fledged Messianic system for the elaborate legal codes that later developed.

J's attitude toward the cultus is typically pre-prophetic. There is no basis for Driver's view that the prophetic viewpoint is "brought forward prominently in J."⁵ J's faith in the dominant system with its messianic head is practically unbounded. Events had not yet transpired in his time to shake that faith. This does not mean that he was so naïve that he did not sense certain dangers in the wholesale adoption of Canaanitic cultic practices. He warns that Yahweh is a jealous God and in the cultural fusion between the Hebrews and Canaanites, the Hebrews are in danger of dividing their loyalty between Yahweh and other gods.⁶

However, an incipient prophetic trend may be observed at certain points in J. For example, the story of Cain and Abel may be cited. Yahweh's rejection of Cain's agricultural offering is held to be a protest on the part of J against the Canaanitic fertility rites. But J's wholehearted acceptance of Messianic kingship meant that the dominant pattern of culture met with his complete approval.

Critics have made much of J's alleged Judean bias. It has always been a prominent element in the motivation offered for his history. It is true that Judah is given a place of prominence wherever possible. For example, he has Judah in the van when the

¹Exodus 34.

²v 17.

³v 25.

⁴v 26.

⁵Driver, op cit., p. 118.

⁶Ex. 34: 11-16.

conquest is undertaken.¹ As we have seen, the Judean David occupies the place of central importance in J's scheme of Hebrew history. But J is fair to Northerners. To be sure, he has to use them in his succession of Yahweh-called leaders for lack of Judeans before David's time. He does this by making them full-fledged Yahwists, but at no point does he detract from their heroism. The legendary figures of the Patriarchal Age early became the property of both South and North, and so no one could be Yahwized with more ease than these early heroes.

At other points, J gives Judah a place of prominence; for example in the Joseph stories² and in the Blessing of Jacob.³ Critical treatises usually point out the prevalence of Judean place names in J. Several of these may be mentioned. For example, Abraham's principal residence is at Hebron, later the great Judaic sanctuary,⁴ Isaac's home is in or near Beer-Sheba,⁵ and Jacob's original home is Beer-Sheba.⁶ The evidences strongly point in the direction of Southern origins for J, it is true. But the social motivation to be found in this Southern interest is another matter. While J may have a preference for the South, which largely grows out of his theory of the relationship of the Southern deity Yahweh with the Hebrew people as a whole through the Davidic house, nevertheless, his interest in the North does not lag. His inclusion of Northern hero stories (Judges) naturally brings him in contact with Northern places. A few references to Northern sites are found in J's patriarchal section, for example, references to the sites of Bethel⁷ and Shechem.⁸

¹Jg. 1: 2. In this he is probably correct. Our latest reconstruction of Hebrew history indicates that Judah was among the earliest of the tribes to enter Canaan, Cf. Genesis 38.

²Gen. 37: 21, 26; 38: 21, 24.

³Genesis 49.

⁴Gen. 13: 18; 18: 1.

⁵Gen. 25: 11; 26: 6, 23-25, 33.

⁶Gen. 25: 11b; 28: 10.

⁷Gen. 28: 19; 35: 14-15.

⁸Gen. 12: 6. Cf. Driver, op.cit., p. 117. Cf. Oesterley and Robinson, Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1934), pp. 30-32.

J's concern for Northern peoples is further shown by his tactful yet sharp criticism for their apostasy from Yahweh.¹ His sympathetic interest in the North is shown in his treatment of the Gideon story. An element in Gideon's greatness was the heroic stand he took against his fellow Manassites and their Baal worship.² Gideon gave implicit obedience to the command of Yahweh to tear down the altar of baal and cut down the Asherah. His fellow townsmen threatened Gideon with death but his father Joash, apparently a former Yahwist, arose to his son's defense with these words: "Will you take Baal's part, or will you champion him? . . . If he is a god, let him take his own part; for his altar has been torn down."³ Although the last part of the passage is apparently given as a basis for the interpretation of the name Jerubbaal, J intends also to convey to his Northern readers the implication of Baal's complete impotence. J thus manipulates this ancient story to impress upon the people of the North the importance of complete fidelity to the national deity, Yahweh.

J's Yahwization of all these Northern stories carries an implied criticism of their Baalism. They have been mistaken, J argues by implication, in their belief that the Baal, under the divine name Elohim, has been responsible for their achievements. Yahweh really has been the Elohim (or the God) who has directed Israel throughout her history, both North and South alike.⁴ The patriarchs were thoroughly good Yahwists. Even the father of one of their greatest heroes, namely, Gideon, was a faithful Yahwist. J's implication is this: "What possible excuse can there now be for faithlessness to a God who has proved his power from time immemorial?" This of course assumes greater importance in J's mind because of his view of the divine character of the Davidic house established as a permanent instrument for Yahweh's dealings with his chosen people.

With J's characteristics before us, there remains to be

¹J's representation of Northerners as falling away from Yahwism may be merely a strategy to show that their present lack of faithfulness was all the more serious inasmuch as they had once known the true way.

²Jg. 6: 25-32.

³v 31.

⁴For J, in theory at least, there was no North or South.

determined his social provenance. The psychology of J is definitely against the older critical view that he wrote in a period of national prosperity. A sense of crisis is imminent in J. There are phases of Hebrew life that J thinks are definitely wrong and which he wishes to correct. The functional character of the Judean history is too clearly manifest everywhere to suppose that J merely wrote to glorify his own tribe for its part in the success of the Hebrew people. Such glory would have to rest on the exalted position of Judah during the age of David and Solomon. There was very little in the history of Judah between the disruption and the probable date of J's appearance in which a loyal Judean could take pride. If J glorifies the Age of David and Solomon, it is because that glory has departed and he desires a renewal of the conditions that will bring a return to that happy state of affairs for both the South and the North.

We have seen that the great ideal of J is a unified Hebrew people. The implication is plainly that the Israelites were dis-united when J wrote. It follows that J must have lived well after the disruption of the kingdom, long enough for him to view in perspective the events both before and after that event and to interpret them in relation to it. For J, the disruption was the great apostasy. The troubles of the Hebrew people as a whole are traceable to that colossal mistake.

J's Judean bias must be considered in determining his social situation. Here again, the evidence points to a time when the fortunes of the Southern kingdom were at extremely low ebb. Moreover, there was hardly a time between the disruption and the first writing prophets that could be called a time of prosperity for Judah. During the age of David and Solomon, Judeans were probably too busy enjoying their good fortune to write about it. The story of the past was most apt to be told when present problems were pressing for solution. Clearly, then, one of J's motivations was his desire to bring hope to his despairing fellow Judeans in a period of national decline.

Let us review the history of Judah following the disruption in the effort to find the situation that fits the conditions. Following the breakup there was continuous warfare for a time between North and South. The first three kings of Judah, Rehoboam, Abijah and Asa, engaged in hostilities with Jereboam and Baasha of Israel. In these encounters Judah came off second best. Baasha even suc-

ceeded in invading Judah and fortifying Ramah, an outpost near Jerusalem.

Following this early internecine struggle, the rise of the strong Omri dynasty in the North brought an interlude in hostilities, but the condition of Judah was improved but slightly. While an alliance existed between the two kingdoms, Israel practically held a suzerainty of Judah. Merely at the request of Ahab, Jehoshaphat hastened to his aid in his effort to recover Ramoth-Gilead from the Aramaeans.¹ Later, Jehoshaphat joined with Jehoram in his struggle with the Moabites.² There was nothing in all this to bring inspiration to the spirit of a proud Judean. But matters were to become still worse. The semblance of alliance may have provided a basis for the hope of a reunion of North and South. The alliance, if so it could be called, was further cemented by the marriage of Jehoram, king of Judah, son of Jehoshaphat, and Athaliah the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. But this must have been an unholy alliance from J's point of view, as later events proved to him. Following the slaying of King Ahaziah by Jehu, his mother Athaliah "arose and destroyed all the royal family."³ Only Joash, the young son of Ahaziah, was hidden away; it looked as though the Davidic line was to become extinct. The Baalist Athaliah was now on the throne of David.

This is the situation that prevails about 840. We would suggest that this milieu provides the motivations for J's history. Only a recalling of Judah's past glory and a reminder of her hope for the future would be the tonic required to instill hope and courage in Judah during these dark days. What must have been the distress in Judah at the prospect of seeing her own Yahwist dynasty brought to such an ignominious end by the Baalist usurper Athaliah! This feeling would be greatly augmented by the fact that Jehu had only recently restored Yahwism as the official religion at Samaria. It would seem that nothing could prevent the transfer of the sceptre from Jerusalem to Samaria. Gross insult had been added to injury. It was not enough that Israel should deny Yahweh's jurisdiction and enter upon an independent course both politically and religiously. Judah could stand with great

¹I K1. 22: 1-23.

²II K1. 3: 7-12.

³II K1. 11: 1-3.

difficulty of course, being cut off from her fellow Hebrews, isolated and reduced to small proportions. But now the Northern Baalists through Athaliah were directly responsible for this threat at Judah's most cherished possession, her divinely appointed instrument of government and medium of Yahweh's blessing, the Davidic dynasty. It was a double threat. Yahweh's prerogatives, established in a ruling line which had been promised from time immemorial, were now to be stolen by the upstart Jehu dynasty. What is more likely than that the priest Jehoiada,¹ or some like figure close to the Jerusalem court, should write the J history in an effort to cope with the distressing conditions. The alarm at such a dire situation is here suggested as J's immediate social motivation.

J was a thoroughgoing Judean, but he could hardly be accused of narrow partizanship. He had a real interest in Northern people and longed for Hebrew unity but that unity could come through but one instrument, the Davidic dynasty, and that was a Judean possession.² It would be unfair to accuse J of theological predilections in his insistence on the significance of the Davidic dynasty. With him it was a practical consideration. The course of events had shown him the great folly of the Northern apostasy from Yahweh. J fervently believed that the future of the Hebrew people lay in facing that future with a united front under the government of a divinely chosen royal family.³

¹The suggestion has similarly been made that the priest Abiathar may have been the writer of David's memoirs, II Sam. 9-20. Cf. A. T. Olmstead, History of Palestine and Syria (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1931), pp. 336-337

²J's attitude is comparable to that of the Roman Catholic Church in regard to the unity of Christendom. It is highly desirable to the Roman Church but can only be effected under the banner of Rome.

³The suggestion of the time of Athaliah as the social milieu of J was made by Dr. W. C. Graham.

